



Story Shape
Shifting

É Memoir Writing Group
with Melanie Bates

Is there a story within you that's longing to be told?

Have you wanted to write a memoir for as long as you can remember?

Are you ready for the writing group to end all writing groups?

Have you been searching for your writing tribe? A group to help keep you accountable to the blank page? A non-fiction family that will offer constructive feedback, support, friendship, laughter and tears?

Are you interested in becoming a master storyteller and learning how to tell present and future stories that utterly change your life and bring you more joy, wholeness, abundance and happiness?



Write, Dream, Inspire

Dearest One,

Writing a memoir can be such a lonely venture full of “where do I start?” and “what do I really want to say?” and “who really cares to hear my story?” Add to that the inner work that is required as one sits down to put pen to paper, or finger to keyboard, and it’s enough to freeze you in your lumbar-supported writing chair. Anyone I know who has written a book, especially a memoir, has had to do that tough inner work and most have had to do it alone. When I started my practice as a Book Shaman I learned as much as my clients about what it really takes to tell your story and I was able to facilitate and witness the deep transformational work that my clients went through in the process. As my clients wrote their memoirs they each had the same outcome - yes, they had a full, edited manuscript ready for submission to agents, but more importantly they had healed thirty, forty-five and, in one case, sixty years worth of deep pain and suffering. That had not been what I expected to happen. At all. I thought, “Oh, I am a devout lover of reading and all forms of writing and I can use my otherwise totally unmarketable degree of English/Creative Writing to guide people through the writing process and use my years of knowledge in the self-help arena to show them how to build their platform and create a business that fills their soul and feeds their book sales. I can even aid in the process that I went through to help an author reach the New York Times bestseller list!” Yeah, that was the least important part of the work we did together. To see my clients write and then re-write the painful stories that had been plaguing them for years and that had caused them so much heartache; to hear them say they had finally healed, well... that was the juice; the unexpected gift that came out of the process.

On top of all of that I also learned, in working with my clients, that we’re all telling present and future stories and sometimes, frankly, we’re not the best storytellers when it comes to shaping our reality. By helping clients to define these present and future stories they’re telling and to shape shift them into stronger, more joy-filled stories, well, that has been utterly life changing. I truly understood, for the first time, that we’re all storytellers and we all have the ability to become master storytellers.

This process led me down a path of “What’s Next?” and this invitation is the culmination of the past seven months of my life in deep reflection, meditation and introspection around story. I decided to take the powerful experiences I had with my one-on-one Book Shaman clients and amp it up by making it a tribe experience. I know how life-changing this work has been with just me and my client focused on the work, so I could only imagine how powerful it would be having 13 women (including myself), in circle, with focus, energy and attention and, holy wow, it feels like magic on steroids.

This is what I want you to experience - the transformative process of healing your past story, becoming a master storyteller of your present and future story and having a completed memoir manuscript to boot. Please read this letter in its entirety, it’s chock-full of the core of this program. If what you read blows your mind, as it has mine, request an application below, fill it out today and get that puppy turned in.

Big, big love,
Melanie

Whether we realize it or not, our lives revolve around stories and have done so since our cave painting days.

Picture it: Cave peeps hunkered down around a blazing fire situated in the middle of the dirt floor, gesticulating wildly about the day's hunt while gnawing on cave lion drumsticks and wiping their greasy fingers on their loincloths. The Shaman crouches alone in the corner capturing the story with images on the cave wall.

We are a people who exists by story.

I believe that story is everything. I believe that story shapes us - our past, our present and our future. I believe that story is integral to every aspect of our lives and there isn't a moment in "time" when we're not telling story. We relate to others through their stories as well.

Even our present thought in this moment is a story that we're telling ourselves, albeit a short one. Perhaps back 30,000 years ago or so, one cave boy's story was, "Me be trampled by mammoth if I leave my furs." Was he a bit of an agoraphobe? Yes. Did the other cave kids sprinkle guano in his gruel when he wasn't looking? Probably. Was he telling himself a story? Absolutely. Was it true? Likely not.

**THE STORY YOU TELL
CAN MAKE OR BREAK
YOU AND IT DETERMINES
THE COURSE OF YOUR
LIFE, AS WELL AS YOUR
LEVEL OF HAPPINESS OR
UNHAPPINESS, AS THE
CASE MAY BE.**

The Stories of Our Past:

We are constantly retelling our past stories - whether to ourselves, to those we've just met, or to those who've experienced them with us or to those who've already heard them a hundred times before. Oftentimes, they morph into something that may not even be real. I once had a step-dad who was a tad warped. When I was in 7th grade or so I brought my report card home - all A's and one B. I was so proud that the miniature frogs on my white turtleneck sleeve were all a blur from my frantically waving it through the air in front of him.

His reaction wasn't exactly what I had anticipated and he scoffed and berated me for that lone B. From that morning forward, he would grab up our vinyl soundtrack to the Wizard of Oz and play "If I Only Had a Brain", on repeat, until I left for school. Suffice it to say, I worked REALLY hard in school and still I felt dumb. I worried my grades like a starving cave bear must have worried a hive full of honey back in the day. And for many, many years I told that story to anyone who would listen. Fast forward thirty years to a pizzeria when I met my ex step-dad for dinner with the rest of the family.

About ten minutes into our grub, he proceeded to tell the folks at the table how whip smart I was as a kid and what good grades I received. I sat there flabbergasted and choking on my slice of pepperoni pie. What different stories each of us told, though we had lived in the same time and space together. I'm sure you can imagine my shock in realizing that the story I'd been telling for the past thirty-odd years was a myth. While I had gotten over that experience many years before through deep forgiveness work and twisting it toward the positive (hey, I was nominated for Valedictorian at the age of forty due to my tenacity, which I firmly believe was gained from this experience), it shaped my reality for a long time in ways I wasn't even aware of. It reminds me of Mark Twain's brilliant words, "I've lived through some terrible things in my life, some of which actually happened."

If we become stuck in that painful story of our past we suffer and that is made manifest through troubles in our relationships, our health, our finances, our mental well-being and... Every. Other. Area. Of our lives. It colors the world around us and it most definitely shapes our current reality.

The Stories of Our Present:

There are a couple different present stories that we tell. Certainly we relay story when someone asks, "How was your day?" or when we describe our loathsome trip to the DMV where we had to sacrifice our first born to renew our driver's license. But we also tell stories of our present through our thoughts. Our thoughts are simply a microcosm of story. Mini-stories, if you will. No so long ago I was running the story, "I'm never going to meet friends like me in Utah." I played that story like Pa Ingalls played his fiddle = often, in the dark of the night, and to the rousing applause and rhythmic feet-stomping of my inner critic. And for three years I sat in my beautiful house every evening, eating buttered noodles and asparagus and watching, you guessed it, Little House on the Prairie. It took me rewriting my story, leaving the noodles and getting out of the house before I did indeed meet some very like-minded, lovely people here - folks that have become dear to me.

The Stories of Our Future:

We tell stories of our future too and these are often told through our imagination, daydreaming, and... the ever-evil future-tripping. The stories we tell of our future can be told in only two ways: through the filter of love or through the filter of fear. I have such a vibrant story written in my head about when the first novel of my trilogy is published.

A synopsis: My publisher brings me to New York and I go down to the newsstand the morning of my book's release and there is a raving review in the New York Times. Within weeks the book hits #1 on the New York Times bestseller list for fiction and stays there for forty-two weeks. It quickly becomes an international bestseller and the foreign rights sell like hotcakes. My second and third book come out within two years and are even more successful than the first. Millions of dollars flow to me from book deals and Guillermo del Toro reaches out about making a movie. Philip Pullman invites me to tea to discuss the work and we get into an in depth philosophical conversation about writing, the role of religion and the history of story. YUM!

When we choose to tell future stories from a place of fear we experience the opposite of joy and we often feel extreme anxiety as we tell them. In fact, I believe anxiety disorders are, in part, a future story set on repeat that includes doom and devastation and we're playing the star role in the impending catastrophe. Let's say I am telling a story about tornadoes. Mainly that I will die every time a strong gust comes. Each time the wind blows I am miles into the future picturing my home swooped up in a funnel, less elegantly than Dorothy's, for sure. My mind quickly spirals into a horror story where I am maimed and pulled fifty thousand feet into the air and dropped. On a wooden picket fence. In Africa. Scary, no?

Can you feel the difference between these two future stories?

- It's super hard to get a book published traditionally these days. Writers definitely can't quit their day jobs. Most writers suffer hundreds of rejections. The only chance I have is to self-publish and give copies to my five closest friends and my family members who are still walking this earth.
- When I publish my memoir with Random House, I'm going to hit the New York Times best seller list, win a Pulitzer and I will be offered multiple book deals.

Which story feels better for you to tell? Do you notice what types of stories you're typically telling? It takes but a moment on Facebook for me to tell what types of present and future stories my friends are telling. Those friends that are talking about how tired they are, how awful their day was, how miserable everything is, those are horror stories for sure. And, daily, there's usually lots of evidence to support their stories.

We all have stories around money, around health, around relationships, around our work, etc... - past, present and future - and most of us don't spend much time examining the stories we're telling in each of these areas of our lives.



The Illusion of Time and Rewriting Your Story

But we can rewrite our story - past, present and future - at any time. I believe, like Albert Einstein, that time is an illusion. Einstein said that the "psychological origin of the concept of time... is undoubtedly associated with the fact of 'calling to mind,' as well as with the differentiation between sense experiences and the recollection of these." And, to boot, Einstein thought that, "The only reason for time is so that everything doesn't happen at once." Further, he said, "...for us physicists believe the separation between past, present and future is only an illusion, although a convincing one." Bear with my here, lest you think I'm nuts. My theory is that because time is an illusion we can alter our past, present and future based on the stories we tell. Mix in deliberate creation too - if our thoughts are mini-stories informing our lives, if thoughts become things, as they say - then we can simply change our stories. THAT, for me, is what makes time an illusion or makes time malleable because we can change the past, present and future just based on the stories we tell about them. We can "call to mind" something different.

Stories can and do change. In fact, fables, myths, fairy tales, even ancient texts - all have changed in their retelling. Some were altered through translation error, while others were just flat out altered to fit the times. Still others have gotten bigger and bigger and bigger, think of the fisherman's famed story of how big his catch was and how it increases over time. Even the bible has changed as translations altered it and new authors contributed to the work hundreds of years later. As it is with our stories, we ourselves are translators and often we don't quite know how to speak the language for our highest good or we just aren't sure how to tell a better story of ourselves or we're just flat out stuck in the old stories that no longer serve us.

Dirty Story vs. Clean Story

Despite my love of Buddhism, I do not believe that desire causes suffering. If I desire to write a bestselling book, it does not cause me to suffer, it's simply something my soul longs to do - it's my calling, if you will. What might cause me to suffer, however, are the stories I might tell myself around it. Perhaps things like:

- I have writer's block.
- I have nothing new or interesting to say.
- I just can't seem to find the time to sit down at the blank page and write.
- Who would want to read my story?

It's those types of stories we tell that cause suffering. I learned in Martha Beck's Life Coach Training about Stephen Hayes's Acceptance and Commitment Therapy around clean pain and dirty pain. I've morphed that concept, given my own understanding, and believe that there is clean story and dirty story which causes clean pain or dirty pain (suffering.)

Animals don't tell stories. Imagine a gazelle, we'll call her Estelle, running from a lion, let's call the lion Astrid. Astrid is chasing Estelle through the tundra and Estelle escapes into a deep river and swims across to the other side. Now the average gazelle, once it feels safe, will immediately drop her head and start munching on some grindage. But for the purpose of my point, let's agree that Estelle is no ordinary gazelle. Our Estelle runs over to her herd of gazelle friends and says, "Ladies, you are not going to believe this! I was just chased by Astrid for four hundred miles, I twisted my hoof something fierce but just kept on bounding until there was nothing but me running. There was no pain. It miraculously disappeared and I just know that the big Gazelle in the sky was on my side. But... let me tell you, I almost didn't make it home. My kids would have been orphans. [Estelle wails.] I can see my funeral now, a pack of hyenas ripping my corpse apart under a brilliant back-light of stars. I almost died. I never would have seen any of you again. Can you believe you almost lost your dearest friend?" [The other gazelles roll their eyes.]

Here's how it works:

Clean story: (Allowing Estelle the expletive), "Holy shit, I was just chased by a lion."

Dirty story: "My gazelle kids were almost orphans, my funeral would have been absolutely awful, I ran four hundred miles and hurt my hoof. I almost didn't make it home, I almost died and what if I never saw any of you again?"

It's our dirty story that causes suffering, not our desires.



The Call to Adventure

As I stated in my letter to you above, I want to help you to tell your past story, through memoir, and to give you the tools to rewrite those painful chapters. I want to help you to recognize and rewrite your present and future stories, as well, so that you can live a life in which you are whole, happy and thriving. I want to teach you the importance of story in your life and how to become a master storyteller, as well as the author of your own brilliant story - both the tangible book you'll hold in your hands, and the intangible stories you'll hold in your heart. And, finally, I would like to do this in the format of a 9-Month writing group. Twelve women total (thirteen, including me) who form a deeply bonded circle around storytelling, constructive feedback, compassionate witnessing and space holding. Think of it as one part Memoir Writing Group, shaken, not stirred, with deliberate creation, and sprinkled with a hefty dose of writing coaching. It's one part healing and one part creating the life of your dreams, for real. We are going to cross the boundaries of time and space and work on past, present and future simultaneously to create a life you could have only dreamed of until now. This is your call to adventure.

If your soul is saying, "YES!" read on...

Hobbits are very concerned about the idea of adventure. As Bilbo said, adventures are "Nasty disturbing uncomfortable things! Make you late for dinner!" And I can't say I much disagree! You have to be a little bit cracked to want to go on an adventure. Think about it. If you had the choice between a comfortable life where you have all the jammy muffins and frosted scones you could wish for, a warm home filled with creature comforts, a strong community--and sleeping outside on the rocky ground in the cold rain eating what sour berries you come across (and perhaps a mangy squirrel if you're lucky), risking life, limb, and happiness to accomplish some goal you think is for the greater good, which would you choose?

"
Sorry! I don't want any adventures, thank you. Not today. Good morning!"

But somehow, something "Tookish" wakes in us, and we wish to see great mountains, hear pine trees and waterfalls, explore caves, and trade our walking sticks for swords. And more than that, we actually do it. Drawn into adventure--into risking it all--against our better judgment. So what drives us reluctant heroes to abandon elevensies in favor of hard tack? ~ Susan J. Morris



What does "drive us reluctant heroes to abandon elevensies in favor of hard tack" then? I believe it's our soul's longing. I've known since I was seven that I wanted to be an author. Despite every job I've ever taken, any work (regardless of how fulfilling) I've ever done, every path I've taken to get where I am today and I know that my calling is as writer, author and story shape shifter. I know, and learn more every day, how intrinsic story is. When you share your story, you become the hero of your own life and everyone roots for the hero. Think about Harry Potter. His story is shared with such vulnerability. Who didn't root for Harry? When you begin to shift your past, present and future stories you too become that hero that everyone, including the Universe, is rooting for.

Who, What, When, Where, How. Details, Details:

Who: 12 Story-Telling Women Ready for Adventure

What: Past, Present & Future Story Shape Shifting & Memoir Writing Group

When: 9 Months - From November 20, 2014 - July 16, 2015 (Minus the weeks of Thanksgiving in the U.S. and Christmas & 1 week in January & 1 week in June which are TBD.)

Where: Virtual (with 1 In-Person Retreat)

How: There will be four calls per month with me. There will also be two calls every three weeks with each of your writing buddies. Each of you will be put into teams of two which will alternate every three weeks so you have a chance to work with everyone in the group. With your partner you'll meet once in that three week period to discuss your partner's writing and once in that three week period to discuss your own writing.



What's Included:

- **1 Monthly Group "Present" Call & Q&A for up to 1.5 Hours** - Recorded
(These calls will be held at 11:30 am PT / 2:30 pm ET on the 1st Thursday of the month.)

In these calls we'll explore the present stories we tell via our thoughts, current beliefs, as well as determining what type of story teller we are in our day-to-day lives. You will learn how to become a master storyteller and, by doing so, live a much more peaceful, joy-filled existence. We'll also leave time for plenty of Q&A for the process.

- **1 Monthly Group "Future" Call & Q&A for up to 1.5 Hours** - Recorded (These calls will be held at 11:30 am PT / 2:30 pm ET on the 3rd Thursday of the month.)

In these calls we will be discussing how to tell future stories that have the potential to become bestsellers. We'll use the processes of scripting, ideal day exercises and a variety of tools and tricks to shape your most joyous future. We'll also spend a large part of these calls showing up as our future dream selves and sharing with each other from that space.

- **2 Monthly Individual Past Writing Coaching Calls with Me for 1 Hour Each** (These calls will be scheduled individually.)

In these calls you and I will be working together on your manuscript, discussing the themes and "promises" that are showing up in your writing. I will also provide deep coaching for any issues that might be coming up for you in the writing process.

- **Reading & Content Editing of Manuscript**

This one is a biggie. I will read your work with my Content Editor hat on for content, flow, pacing, structure, theme, readability and overall effectiveness and offer suggestions for cutting fluff and/or flushing out story and appropriate content. I also proofread as I go along (keep in mind that I'm not a line editor, though I am a damn good speller.) Think of it as having your own personal Content Editor there to make your work as strong as possible.

- **Structure & Accountability Partnership**

My Book Shaman clients found this to be one of the most valuable pieces of our process together. Structure and accountability are half the battle in showing up to the page. Now, not only will you have accountability support from me, you'll have it from the other twelve members of our tribe as well.

- **Critique & Critiquing Guidelines**

This program will function as a traditional writing group in our critique process. You will each be required to read each other's manuscripts and provide valuable insight and feedback to your fellow writers and the same will be done for you. Critiquing guidelines will be provided.

What's Included:

- **A Private Facebook group where we can convene online and connect outside of our calls**

This will be our sacred space where we can gather to talk with each other about the writing process, our triumphs and our struggles. This will also be our spot of accountability where we can share how each day's writing process went.

- **Wrap Up Retreat, Story Time & Meet-&-Greet Celebration in Park City, Utah**

(Airfare not included.) Tentative dates - end of July, early August 2015

Think Glamping around a fire with s'mores and story, yet being pampered and sleeping in a luxurious bed with all the amenities of home. A black car service will pick you up at SLC International Airport and transport you to Park City where you'll be checked into your luxury suite with your assigned roomie (each suite has 2 private bedrooms with private baths, so you'll have your own space.) We will gather on a Friday night at The Sky Lodge - an intimate, stylish, boutique hotel in the heart of Historic Main Street (the epicenter of Park City's vibrant, sophisticated charm.) We will hold a dinner & drinks meet & greet, followed by story time on Friday evening with legendary story teller Michael Trotta, who will discuss how fairy tales, myths, etc... function and play out in our lives and what we can learn from them. On Saturday you'll have the morning free to explore the city, shop, hike the beautiful trails near the property, or treat yourself to the hotel's Japanese soaking tubs, energy work or massage. At noon we'll gather for lunch and then have a two-hour guest lecture with Conscious Creation guru, Jeannette Maw. After more free time we'll gather for dinner & drinks, followed by another campfire story time with Michael Trotta. On Sunday morning we'll gather for breakfast and part ways after a weekend full of connection, laughter and amazement.

Black Car Service, Hotel and Dinner Friday & Saturday, Lunch on Saturday and Breakfast on Sunday are covered by me, along with a super-yummy surprise gift chock full of meaning for our group.



More about Michael Trotta:



Michael Trotta is a father, husband, storyteller, wood sculptor, natural learning specialist, certified teacher, master coach, and founder of the Sagefire Institute for Nature-Based Coaching and Leadership Development. He has spent many years learning wilderness living skills and tracking. He's a student of native cultures and the Hero's Journey, a proud dyslexic, writer and curriculum developer, facilitator of rites-of-passage programs, and a community builder who's obsessed with cultural repair. He loves coffee and has created multiple transformative coaching and mentoring programs while drinking lots of it!!!!!! By his own assessment (and a few others) he'd say he's an all-around swell guy who values quiet time in nature as well as authentic conversations with others who strive to leave the world a better place than they found it.

More about Jeannette Maw:



Jeannette Maw is the Good Vibe Coach on a mission to inspire deliberate creators - through her LOA blog, online manifesting university, private coaching, monthly newsletters, group gatherings and speaking events. She is a contributor to Jack Canfield's Mastering the Law of Attraction and was invited to appear on Oprah's law of attraction episode to share about the manifesting method called Pray Rain Journaling. Developed through her years of study and experience, Jeannette shares a down to earth practical approach to conscious creation.

Gift 1: Your Big Beautiful Book Plan



I see no need to recreate the wheel when it comes to developing your book proposal so you'll be receiving the amazing gift of Linda Sivertsen and Danielle LaPorte's YB-BBP for FREE. Yup... Here's what's included:

Never-before-shared book proposal samples that landed six-figure advances, attracted top literary agents, and changed lives (both the authors, and their reader's). This is your behind-the-scenes view into what grabs an agent's attention, what captivates publishers, and the logic of a book plan that grows your career.

We've wrangled book proposal samples from 20+ successful book deals.

You're going to flip for:

- **The Fire Starter Sessions**, Danielle's digital program that she turned into a major publishing deal with Random House
- **Generation Green**, Linda's multiple award-winning book that she co-authored with her teenage son, and sold to Simon & Schuster
- **Chris Guillebeau's \$100 Start Up book**
- **The Malaria Book, from Michael Bungay Stanier**, which raised over \$250K for End Malaria and was an Amazon bestseller
- **Love Junkie, from Rachel Resnick**, a memoir that Vanity Fair praised for its "staggering honesty, raw and unsparing humor..."
- **Tim Ferriss' blockbuster, The 4-Hour Body, Michael Ellsberg's Educating Millionaires, Rhonda Britten's Fearless Living...and more, more, more!**

THE BIG BEAUTIFUL WORKBOOK. A self- and career-inquiry process that gets to the grit of why and what you need to write, plus target audience clarification, self-promotion + pitching exercises, and a bevy of creative-hermit practices.

* Techniques to capture the content that is...your life. Because your book has already been written – in your client work, blog posts, email chains + cafe conversations. We'll show you how to spin your "undiscovered work" into gold.

* Strategies for building your platform as you create your product.

* Empowering lessons for rolling with rejection, hearing your muse, and gathering testimonials.

* A pro's + cons drill-down of traditional vs. self-publishing options – with been-there insights from both sides. Timely, no?

* 10 (Sexy + Thrilling) Ways To Finish The Damn Book—because writer's block isn't in our vocabulary, and the finish line is closer than you think.

* 8+ hours of audio + video interviews with agents and high-profile authors, including:

- Arielle Ford, former publicity powerhouse behind Deepak Chopra and author of The Soulmate Secret
- prize-winning fiction writer Sarah Selecky
- serial entrepreneur + publishing renegade Jonathan Fields
- one-woman publishing empire Lou Paget
- and a whole lot of other mavericks and tireless authors.

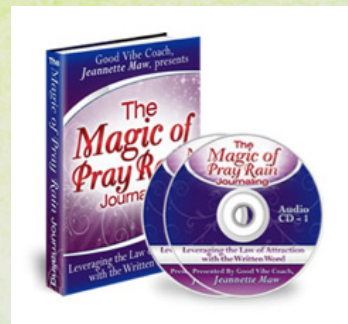
Gift 2: Pray Rain Journal:

Pray Rain Journal - This will be a blank journal sent to you for the purpose of Jeannette Maw's Pray Rain Journaling process (see below.)



Gift 3: eCourse

The Magic of Pray Rain Journaling eCourse with Jeannette Maw (We'll be using this process extensively throughout our 9 months together.)



Gift 4: Book Club:

Includes Anne Lamott's Bird by Bird, as well as your choice of 2 of the following memoirs:



Gift 5: Cassie Parks Guided Ideal Day:

You'll each receive a 1/2 hour call with Money, Money, Money maven Cassie Parks where you'll discuss your ideal day and future story. After the call Cassie will create a personal guided visualization for you.

Some of the Additional Gems We'll Uncover:

- **Platform Building for Publication** - You'll learn what agents and publishers are looking for in terms of publishing. Even if you were to decide to self-publish you still need a pool of people who love you to buy your book.

- **Building the Sacred Space for Writing** - This has been key for helping my clients to train their brain in daily writing.

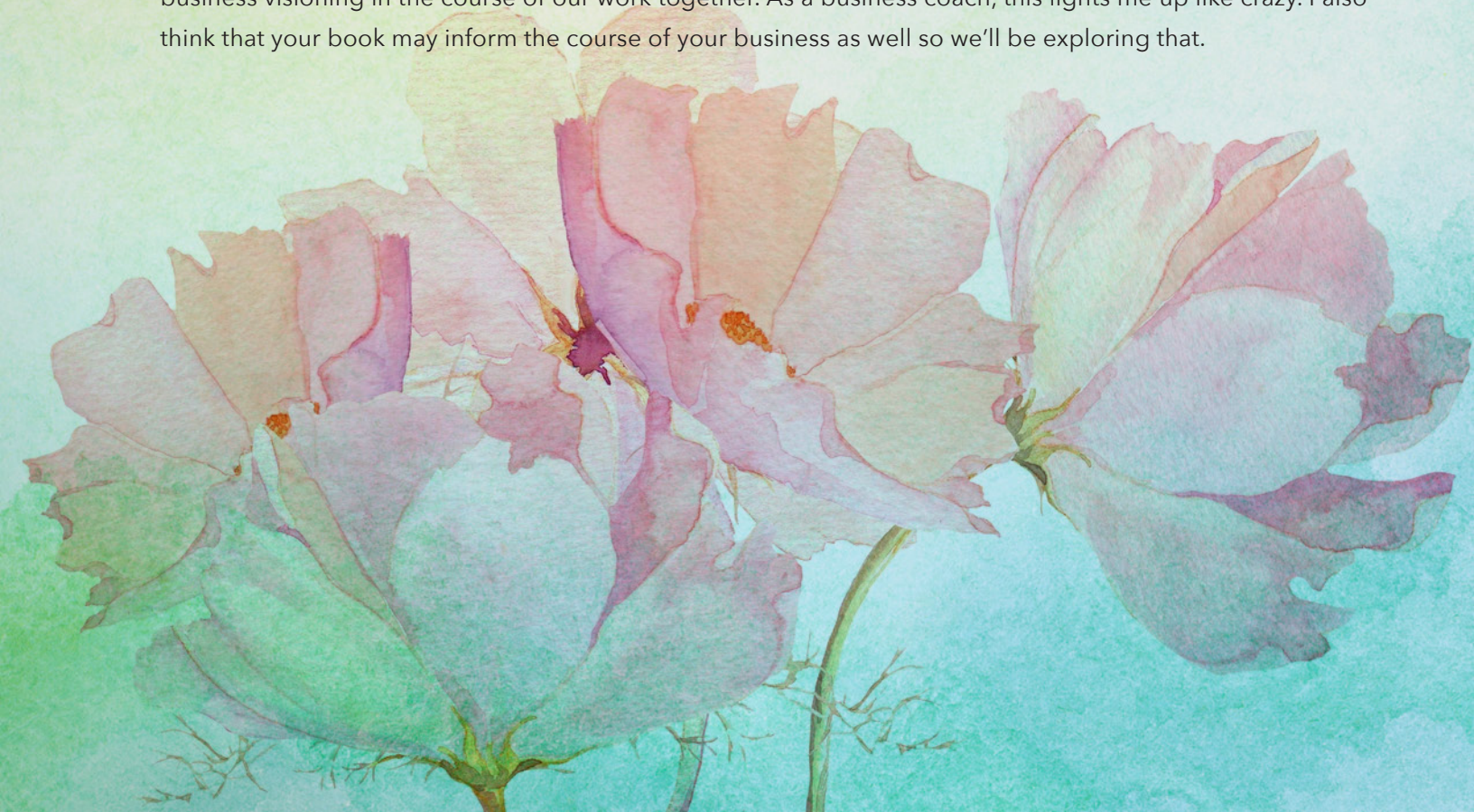
- **Creating the Sacred Container for our Tribe** - This will be a process done in the beginning of our work together as a group to strengthen and shape our experience as a tribe.

- **Commitment to Writing** - Together we'll come up with an individual plan and commitment to your writing practice.

- **Scripting** - You'll learn the ins and outs of scripting and utilize the Pray Rain journaling practice, along with other techniques.

- **Deliberate Creation** - This is not The Secret, it goes well beyond that into the physics of shaping your reality (and the stories that shape it, of course.)

- **Business Building** - It naturally happens with all my Book Shaman clients that we invariably end up doing business visioning in the course of our work together. As a business coach, this lights me up like crazy. I also think that your book may inform the course of your business as well so we'll be exploring that.



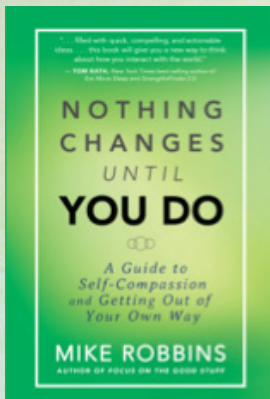
What People Are Saying:



"Choosing to work with Melanie Bates was hands-down, bar none the best decision I could have made for myself and for my book. I honestly don't know if I would have ever finished my book without her caring guidance and support. She was truly with me every step of the way - from the scary beginning until the triumphant finale! The accountability that our weekly calls provided made sure to keep me on track and moving forward. I would wholeheartedly recommend Melanie to anyone even thinking about writing a book.." ~ **Jenni Bevill, Writer, Life Coach & Ambassador of Om**



"Melanie Bates... Thank you for being the daily sounding board for the ideas that bubbled up as I researched and wrote this book. Transmuting fuzzy thoughts into language people can understand is no small task, but you made it feel like a picnic. I loved learning all this with you by my side, and I will always consider this book part yours. You once told me it was part of your calling to help me bring my message into the world, and darling - phew! We've done it. Thank you." ~ **Lissa Rankin, New York Times Bestselling Author of Mind Over Medicine: Scientific Proof That You Can Heal Yourself**



"Melanie Bates, what a blessing you have been in my life, for my business, and with my book. Your partnership, support, feedback, editing, and vision helped this come alive - it would not have happened in the way and the time it did without you, your gifts, and your incredible support, thank you!" ~ **Mike Robbins, Author of Nothing Changes Until You Do: A Guide to Self-Compassion and Getting Out of Your Own Way**



I am in awe of the person I have become since working with Melanie. I just completed my last session and although deeply saddened, as our time together has come to an end, I am walking into my new life with direction and a confidence I sorely lacked five months ago. My main goal and hope in embarking on this journey was to complete my manuscript and to know what my life purpose and income stream would be. Pretty lofty dreams but, after all, I was paying a great deal of money and I wanted my monies worth. To my utter shock I finished my manuscript and in our final hours together my life's purpose fell into both of our laps as though divinely delivered. It surprised us both, but in another way it was not surprising at all. Together we had let it arrive in its time and it did. In addition to fulfilling her commitment to me, through my writing, I was able to heal so many years of emotional suffering. Melanie's authenticity, nurturing love and well-honed intuition provided her with a deep soul knowing of exactly what I needed and when I needed it. She simply took my hand and guided me with amazing gentleness to the most unexpected and healing results. I will be forever grateful to her and whatever entity brought us together." ~ **Sydney Brown, MSW ~ Writer & Licensed Clinical Social Worker**

Request an Application:

Entrance Interview: Before anyone is accepted into the program a completed application is required after which we will have a 1/2 hour phone call to determine fit, discuss details and answer any questions you might have.

*A short writing sample is required with your completed application - this can be a blog post or any other form of writing you have.

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Investment:

Time Investment: 9 Months plus 1 In-Person Retreat. You agree to show up fully for our five hours of calls each month, as well as your writing partner calls, to show up to the page to write and to attend the retreat. Our time is sacred and we agree to honor each other's time.

Energetic Investment: I think of this group as a sacred container which I will hold energetically. I will hold space for you throughout the nine months of this program, even when we're not engaging in person or on the phone. (This is why I'm only taking 12 clients.) You will also be holding energetic space, for yourself and for the group, for your writing and for your "muse."

Monetary Investment: A non-refundable deposit of \$3000 upon acceptance into the program plus an additional \$7495 paid in 5 installments of \$1499 each **OR** save \$500 and pay the full amount up front of \$9995.

"There is a vitality, a life force, an energy, a quickening that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all of time, this expression is unique. And if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and it will be lost. The world will not have it. It is not your business to determine how good it is nor how valuable nor how it compares with other expressions. It is your business to keep it yours clearly and directly, to keep the channel open. You do not even have to believe in yourself or your work. You have to keep yourself open and aware to the urges that motivate you. Keep the channel open. ... No artist is pleased. [There is] no satisfaction whatever at any time. There is only a queer divine dissatisfaction, a blessed unrest that keeps us marching and makes us more alive than the others"

– Martha Graham

With Love & Beautiful Stories,
Melanie

About Melanie:



I'm a Book Shaman, a Life Coach and, above all, a writer (with a dash of nomad and nondescript heathen tossed into my mix.) I began my writing career at the age of seven when I penned my first brilliant short story about witches with carbuncles. As a teenager my writing leaned toward the morose when I attempted to write my vast memoir at the age of fourteen. Finally, at seventeen, with my towering experience in regards to the matters of love, I wrote a few pages of a romance novel. I'm currently working on a young adult fantasy trilogy and gearing up for an MFA in Creative Writing/Writing Popular Fiction.

My 10,000 hours (of Malcolm Gladwell fame) in "applying ass to chair", obtaining a Bachelor's in English/Creative Writing and devouring thousands of books, spawned my Book Shaman practice where I have helped *New York*

Times bestselling authors to "transmute fuzzy thoughts into language people can understand" and as a content editor I have used my brilliance to bring structure and form to some really amazing books that line the shelves of your local bookstores. I bring accountability, partnership and process to my writers which allows them to face the blank page and actually pen their brilliant work.

I also get a super-charged kick each day by coaching visionaries who are ready to set out on their (s)hero's journeys, but can't quite find their way. Together we map brilliant paths toward their futures, set and hold bold intentions and slay the dragons that are blocking them from their life purpose. Once they arrive at their destinations we begin building the foundations of their empires.

I've moved over thirty times, hence the nomadic nature, but for now I reside in the Wild, Wild West with the loves of my life: my boyfriend and two pups - So-Kr8z and Sancho. To some this urge to move might seem exciting, however, there have been times I've ended up in the deepest bowels of our great Mother Earth. E.g.: I spent a year living in Rawlins, Wyoming where I was blown back and forth across the road and ran home from school every day on the lookout for dark vans that kidnapped children. I once peed my pants while frantically searching for my latchkey.